

Abstract

An improved system is provided for authentication of mail pieces bearing bar-coded indicia. The system comprises first and second bar-code readers, the first and second bar-code readers differing in that the first bar-code reader has a lower rate of successful reading of bar-coded indicia than the second bar-code reader. The system collates a mail piece bearing an indicium in a second paper path in the event of a successful reading of the bar-coded indicium by said first bar-code reader, and collates mail pieces in a third paper path in the event of an unsuccessful reading of the bar-coded indicium by the first bar-code reader. The third paper path leads to the second bar-code reader, and the system collates mail pieces in a fourth paper path in the event of a successful reading of the bar-coded indicium by the second bar-code reader. The system collates mail pieces in a fifth paper path in the event of an unsuccessful reading of the bar-coded indicium by the second bar-code reader.